

An Essay on  
Rheumatism

Respectfully Submitted to the  
Faculty of the

Homoeopathic Medical College  
of  
Pennsylvania

On the twenty sixth day of January  
Eighteen hundred & fifty four

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Georgia.

*fair details with in some respects.*

Among the various ills to which flesh is heir to, there is one disease, which at the South Seas prevails, not for its danger, but for its predominance and the intricacy with which it maintains its grasp when once it obtains a firm hold on the system, the suffering the patient endures and the almost hopelessness of cure under all former modes of treatment —

Rheumatism is one among the many numerous diseases that shows the vast superiority of Homoeopathic over Allopathic treatment, in the mitigation of the pains and shortening the period of its duration — I accordingly have had some experience in treating this disease, although the professional knowledge may not have been what it should

be, or what I would like to have had it,  
but still the little that was, produced  
results more beneficial than anything  
Allopathy had done

I think there is a greater pro-  
-alence of Rheumatism in the Southern  
Climate than there is here at the north.  
The sudden changes and great extremes  
from heat to cold here would lead us  
to infer different, and that a more  
equable and less variable temperature  
would be more conducive to health in  
this respect. but in the Southern Climate  
there is more humidity in the atmosphere.  
The summer heat has more of a Satyry  
feeling, and its long duration produces  
a relaxing and emollient effect on the  
System, There is not the burning fiery

feeling that is experienced here on what is called a hot day or in the summer heats generally, It is a rare thing then to see a Case of "Coup de Soleil" although the thermometer ranges as high and the workman is as much exposed to the heat,

This effect I attribute to the peculiar state of the atmosphere. I accordingly think Moisture is one of the principal and exciting cause of all Rheumatic Complaints.

Rheumatism is put down by Authors as of two kinds, Acute and Chronic, but there are varieties that might well be put in Separate Classes, Such as Mercurial Rheumatism, Rheumatism of the head, loins &c which might require Separate and distinct treatment,

Acute Rheumatism is preceded

by a precursory stage, with febrile symptoms  
Chilliness, more or less soreness of the joints  
in walking, which lasts but a short time  
before the symptoms increase in intensity,  
the disease becoming fully established and  
localizing itself generally in the lower and  
larger joints first. The joint, ligaments &  
tendons become swollen, inflamed and  
very sensitive to the touch, extremely painful  
and the least motion increases the sufferings.  
There is more or less fever, thirst, high colored  
& scanty urine, Constipation, loss of appetite  
and aggravation of symptoms at night.  
Sometimes bleedings at the nose, or in females  
from the uterus, Sometimes profuse sweat  
but affording little or no relief, or there may  
be delirium or metastases to the brain  
heart or lungs. The pain generally

increases in intensity for a few days, then gradually subsides, leaving the parts much swollen, tumefied, and painful on motion. The disease then attacks one or more of the other joints, goes through a similar course of access and decline, and in this way most of the large joints are attacked and cured. An attack of acute Rheumatism generally lasts from two to four weeks—but after the pains and swelling are all cured, and the patient comparatively well, there still remains for a longer or shorter period, a soreness & tenderness of the feet and joints in walking which gradually wears off.

The Causes of Rheumatism, & attribute to Moisture, dampness, or the action of water in some form on the system

and Especially after becoming fatigued or  
over heated, and getting thoroughly wet in a  
shower of rain, Constant working in water  
or sleeping in wet places or damp shutts  
As far as my experience goes, all the Cases  
I have seen could be traced to the action  
of water in some form

The remedies principally used  
for this disease are Acon Bel Bry, Rhus, Pul  
Mer. or Ars Ars Cham, Colch, China, Iach Sul  
and for threatened Metastasis to the heart  
Ars Iach or Acon

It is useless for me to fill up  
these pages with Copies of Symptoms  
of each remedy from the Materia Medica  
or from any of our text books, as it would  
labor with no credit to myself or benefit  
to any one, but will give one Case I

had last summer and the medicines  
I then used. A negro girl was sent  
to <sup>me</sup> the bloody dysentery, She had had  
it about a week, I gave her Mer. Sub which  
relieved her in the course of three days -  
Two days after she sent for me, I found her  
with her left ankle joint much swollen,  
hot, tender to the touch very painful, and  
with inability to move it, Some fever, Constipation  
and no appetite, She said her ankle had  
commenced paining her during her attack of  
dysentery, I commenced by giving her Acon  
and Bry alternately, of the third attenuation  
in water, a dose every two hours, the next  
day I found her no better, but the symptoms  
all rather increased, I continued the Acon  
and Bry, for about a week, during the day  
she would have intervals of partial relief

but as evening came on the pains grew more  
severe, and during the night more extremely  
so - and insupportable, about the sixth or  
seventh day her left wrist and elbow and  
right knee joints became affected, but not  
as soon as the first joint attacked, there  
occasional delirium especially in the even-  
ing and night, she complained of her  
leg being numb, dead, wanted it cut off -  
wanted to get up and go home - I gave  
her some Rh<sup>us</sup> instead of the Bry, but the  
Symptoms still increased, soon had aches  
hot dry skin, discharge of blood from the  
utero, pain in the right lumbar region  
extending round and upwards towards the  
bony & scrobicular Cordis. Chills every other  
day, the last of the second and beginning  
of the third the disease was at its height

about this time she had two attacks commencing with great pain in her side and bowels some headache, delirium with apparent loss of vision, stupor, and with an appearance of inability to draw her breath, as if there was partial paralysis of the lungs. I was afraid there might be metastases to the heart, or that the disease was extending there, and gave her Ars. 6<sup>th</sup> a dose every twenty minutes until her breath gradually became regular. I then gave Bel a few doses half hour apart, which relieved the some head symptoms, and afterwards gave the Rh<sup>us</sup> and Acon again. I never had seen a case with such some symptoms before and thought at the time, that my patient was in rather a dangerous situation, but under the use of Ars and Bel. the most

Symptoms gradually passed off. In a few days after this she commenced to improve, the pains in the joints grew much less soon, the delirium ceased, urine became more free, the bowels looser, and her appetite returned, and at the end of the fourth week could sit-up some but could not walk about until a week after. The first joint attacked was the last to get well. In this Case I found Rhus to be more Empirical than Bry but still I gave Bry sometimes with the Rhus. For the pains in the head and delirium, I gave Bel. and for the threatened extension to the heart, I gave according to Linnæus's directing Ars. In all Cases of inflammatory Rheumatism I have found Acon one of my best remedies, in relieving the pains and checking the inflammation, but in this Case

I was disappointed in its use for there was no  
cessation, entirely, of pain from the commencement  
until the fourth week. There are a great  
variety of the acute form, some cases being  
very severe and complicated, others with but  
few of the bad symptoms, and yielding speedily  
to the appropriate remedies. Persons once  
attacked with this disease are more liable  
to a return than otherwise, but I have known  
several persons who had it several years ago  
who now had but one attack and who are  
now apparently well and hearty.

There are also a great variety of  
forms of Chronic Rheumatism, in some the  
symptoms are light, in others severe, varying  
in their length, in some short & intermittent,  
in others long and continuous, and generally  
all are more or less affected by the changes

of the matter, The joints are located in the  
Muscles, ligaments, and bones. Sometimes  
causing Swellings or nodes of the bones or even  
softening dissolution & exudation, The Cause  
of Chronic Rheumatism, may be from a Continuation  
of the acute form, or from a Pore  
Syphilitic or mercurial diathesis, Sometimes  
its course will be for months and months, and  
notwithstanding the use of the best selected  
medicines, there will be very little if any  
appearance of improvement, again other Cases  
will be relieved in a few days or weeks, but  
still liable to return with any exciting Cause.

The remedies in use for Chronic  
Rheumatism, are Acon, Bry, Calc, Carveg, Dul Hepar  
Iach Mer Phos Rhus Sil Sul Ver.  
and for old Cases of long standing Sul. Cal  
with aggravations from cold mt-matter, Cal Sul Mer  
Dul Iach Rhus Ver

Electro Magnetism is a remedy that I have used with much Satisfaction to myself, and with great relief and benefit to my patients, This may not be in strict accordance with the ideas of all Homoeopaths but my reasons for using it is not from experiment alone but from the law "Similia" and from Analogy.

A full Charge of Electricity from a powerful Galvanic Battery passed along a nerve for a continuous length of time will paralyze it, A weak Current and at broken intervals passed along a paralyzed nerve, will restore its vitality - A powerful shock passed through the system will produce pains that may last for days or weeks, and a proper application of Electricity will restore them

I believe that the nervous fluid of

the body is analogous to Electricity and that in certain cases, one of the ultimate Causes of disease is the derangement of this nervous force, and that a proper and judicious application of Electricity to such diseased parts will restore the proper action of the nervous force, thereby producing health,

Has there been any positive proof how one attenuated drug acts in disease?

There are theories advanced and put forth to the world, but one theory is just as good as another until a fact is established,

Can any one suppose that the 800, 1000, or 100,000, attenuations act chemically on the System or the disease which it intends to control?

These attenuations are far beyond the Chemical domain of Matter, and I am almost tempted to say the philosophical domain also,

Thou whence do they derive their power & how  
do they obtain it, I know of no other  
power which a drug can call to its aid  
or assimilate with itself by trituration but  
Electricity, There is no element known that  
produces such a universal and powerful  
action,

If the eye has a nerve of  
Special Sense by which it sees, the ear by  
which it hears, why not the liver have a  
peculiar nervous influence by which it secretes  
the bile, the kidneys to secrete the urine,  
the lacteals to absorb the Chyle, the blood  
to circulate, new granules to be deposited in  
their proper place, effete matter carried  
off, and all the different organisms to  
carry on their peculiar functions, I ask  
why may not all these have a nervous  
influence peculiar to themselves, and distinct

disease in its proper tissues, And an attenuated dose of the same drug, restores its proper nervous action, producing the State called Health, Therefore I have taken my authority, both through "Similia" and analogy, for the use of Electro Magnetism in the removal of pain and the curing of disease, Still I think it acts more Mechanically than Medicinally, and that is, by the removal of obstructions for the passage of the nervous fluid. The object of a Physician is to relieve his patient of Suffering as soon as possible, as well as to Cure the Cause exciting it, The use of means like this I think is both proper as well as expedient, although it may not perform a radical Cure, it will give ease to the patient and allow our medicines to act more beneficially

Now whether Electro Magnetism acts  
Mechanically or Medicinally, through "Similia"  
or analogy, its Capability of removing pains  
in Rheumatism cannot be denied. In the  
application of Electricity for Rheumatism or  
any other disease, it was formerly the practice  
to let the patient take hold of both handles  
or poles of the battery, or apply the metallic  
handles to the diseased parts. In either  
Case the electric fluid was not properly  
conducted to the parts affected, also the  
application of the metal to the skin  
produces intense pain and useless suffering.  
The proper mode of applying it, is to give  
the patient the negative pole to hold in  
his hand, or place it under the Coccyx  
attached to a wet Sponge. the operator  
taking the positive pole in one hand

and apply the other to the affected part, this causes the electricity to pass directly through the parts wanted to be operated on, in a gentle manner producing no pain or suffering, but in most cases relieving the pain promptly and with much satisfaction to the patient.

In the use of the battery for Rheumatism, twenty minutes to half an hour, will be a sufficient length of time for each application and although, in some cases, the pain may return after some hours, yet after each application, the intervals of return will be longer apart and the pains less soon. In using the battery, of course I always gave the properly indicated Homoeopathic Medicine. I have found the battery more beneficial in the chronic, than the acute form of disease, and in cases where Rheumatism has caused

Paralysis of a part, an arm or a hand,  
a few applications, will restore its vitality -  
The use of the battery is not only of service in  
relieving pain, and assisting in the cure of  
disease, but it can also be of great service in  
diagnosing disease. If there is disease internally,  
and it is difficult to locate the precise  
organ affected, the proper application of  
Electricity will point out the precise spot.  
If there is a chronic affection a dull pain  
will be produced, if an acute, a sharp sticking  
pain will be experienced, and by this means,  
Every patient, that came to me with the Rheu-  
matism, I found their liver more or less  
affected.

A Subject of such im-  
portance as this, Cannot be properly  
treated, in the form of a thesis, it  
would require more time and paper than

than is usually bestowed on works of this  
class, but will say in conclusion, that if  
any one wishes to examine into, or take up  
the Subject of Electro Magnetism, they will  
find in this, as in other Subjects, experience  
to be one of our best teachers —